

Hello my name is John Graham.

I am a Health & Safety Instructor & Officer for the NY District Council of Carpenters.

In addition, I am an Emergency Medical Technician.

I participated in the initial response, rescue, recovery, and clean-up operation at the WTC site , beginning the morning of September 11th, 2001 and ending on May 30th 2002.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I reported to the WTC site on behalf of the Carpenter's Union as a safety officer to assist and aid fellow carpenters who were working at the WTC site who might be in need of assistance due to the initial plane crash.

Upon reaching the scene I was utilized by emergency personnel as an EMT stationed at the base of the North tower where I witnessed the most horrific events that I have ever seen in my life. Events that continue to haunt me to this day.

I continued to perform these duties despite the appalling scene unfolding before me until I was momentarily incapacitated by the collapse of the WTC.

With the collapse of the twin towers, I and all of those present on that day and those who came to the site in the days and weeks that followed, became the victims of one of the worst chemical exposure events in the history of the United States of America.

On that day, I was engulfed by a toxic cloud composed of (but not limited to) pulverized asbestos, lead, mercury, cadmium, PCB's, and benzene which are known to be highly corrosive to human lungs.

This cloud contaminated much of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, unbeknownst to the innocent people living and working in the neighborhoods surrounding the WTC site.

My exposure to this toxic soup of carcino-genics continued throughout the 262 days that I worked at the WTC site.

Almost immediately I began to feel the ill effects of this exposure.

In the moments after the cloud of the collapsed WTC began to clear, I and those around me, lucky enough to be alive, began to gag, choke, and vomit from the forced inhalation of the toxic cloud. I had to rinse my face and eyes to try to find relief from the severe burning sensation I was feeling on my skin and in my eyes.

Within two weeks of my initial exposure, I had begun to develop severe respiratory symptoms necessitating medical attention. Knowing that Dr. Stephen Levin of Mt. Sinai's Occupational and Environmental Medical Center is an expert on chemical exposure on job sites, I turned to him for his medical expertise. Since October 2001, I have been receiving treatment from Dr. Levin and his staff at Mt. Sinai for my respiratory and other symptoms resulting from my chemical exposure at the WTC site.

I have been diagnosed with and continue to suffer from, RADS, reactive airway disease, a chronic form of asthma resulting from the chemical exposure at the WTC site. My rescue inhaler is my constant companion, despite the staff at Mt. Sinai doing their best to help me as much as is medically possible at this point in time.

In addition to my medical difficulties, I have been and continue to suffer from chronic posttraumatic stress disorder for which I have been receiving treatment since October 2001.

Prior to the 9/11, I was a healthy, hardworking, father, son, and husband. Today, I am a chronically ill man who is anxious about his ability to support his family. I am no longer able to work as a carpenter. My chronic asthmatic condition makes it difficult for me to carry out my duties as a safety officer, father, son, and husband, as I often have to stop my activities to use my inhaler and catch my breath. It breaks my heart to not be able to run and play with my two daughters the way I once was able.

I am not alone in the ill effects that I am suffering from my chemical exposure on 9/11/01 and the days and months after. I am one of thousands. Despite the best treatment available, we continue to experience severe symptoms and more research is needed to understand the diseases we suffer from and the treatments that are effective in bringing relief. I am not naive enough to think that anyone can cure us from the chemical exposure we have experienced. But some relief would be nice.

